

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



LEIGHTON
ART CENTRE

OUR MISSION

The Leighton Art Centre is a place where artists and community members learn, grow, and are inspired to connect with their intrinsic creativity through a connection between art and the land.

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The privilege of Leighton Art Centre's presence on 80 acres of foothills landscape within Treaty 7 territory is combined with respect, humility, and responsibility to be caretakers of the land. We acknowledge the people of these ancestral and traditional lands, which include the Niitsitapi - Blackfoot Confederacy - comprised of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani; the îyârhe Nakoda - Stoney Nakoda - including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation and Otipemisiwak Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We also recognize that many more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit have marked these lands with their footsteps. We are grateful for all people who make their home in, or visit, the Treaty 7 territory of Southern Alberta, and who act as respectful stewards to this land, where we learn, create, and build relationships in meaningful ways.

Photos by Leighton Art Centre Staff



FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Lay of The Land...

The Leighton Art Centre exists at the crossroads of art and nature, young and old, and the past and future. In 2024, the organization celebrated 50 years of operation while embracing a year of change. Along with change, it was a year of many successes and one that began to lay the groundwork for the next half century of supporting, nurturing, and building our community.

As we look back on 2024, it is vital to acknowledge where we have come from, and the role we seek to play in the arts ecology.

The Leighton Foundation (operating as the Leighton Art Centre) was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in September 1974 and is also a registered charity. The Foundation was established as custodian for the public interest from the estate of A.C. and Barbara Leighton to:

- preserve the works of A.C. Leighton
- provide encouragement and education to local artists
- cultivate public awareness and appreciation for art through the use of the site, collection, exhibition space and buildings which include the Leighton Residence and three working studios on 80 acres of land

Operationally, the Leighton Art Centre:

- hosts exhibitions of local and international artists
- supports the sales of works from a variety of artists
- operates classes for children and adults throughout the year
- offers special week-long classes for children in the summer
- facilitates art, craft and conservation classes and workshops

The Lay of The Land... (con't)

So **'Why is Leighton important'** ...or maybe more importantly, why should we value the arts? The Arts provide our society with some of our greatest tools for expressing our shared humanity and for helping us understand our relationship with nature and our connection within the natural world - one of the most pressing issues of our times.

At the Leighton Art Centre, understanding the relationship between art and nature is core to our purpose, values, and programs – and, we explore this relationship on 80 acres of grassland here in the foothills overlooking the Rocky Mountains in many ways:

- We collaborate with artists who engage with natural systems
- We provide children with the tools of exploration and creativity, paving the way for future innovators
- We honour Indigenous histories, traditions, and art forms that teach interconnection with nature
- We centre the needs of the flora and fauna in our operations
- We work with scientists to care for grassland ecosystems

As a not-for-profit art and nature centre, we do this important work for the benefit of all our communities – now, and for future generations.

Last year we said goodbye to some friends, including our Executive Director, Ms. Christina Cuthbertson, as she moved onto new endeavours in the fall. In November last year we also welcomed Mr. Darryl Lindenbach, as Interim Executive Director, and he has already been able to make some meaningful contributions to the organization and its future.

In 2024, we presented a variety of engaging exhibitions and embarked on a number of changes that will continue to guide the organization for years to come. The Leighton Art Centre experienced a stronger financial outcome last year, turning the page on past challenges, with a view to building on this success in the future.

It goes without saying that all this important, and hard, work is not the product of any one person - but rather a team of dedicated staff, board, artists and volunteers. To paint the rest of the picture of the year that was, we asked our staff to share some of their thoughts about their work and the 2024 year at The Leighton Art Centre.

Thank you all for your support and faith in the Leighton Art Centre for the past 50 years, we look forward to what the next 50 years will hold.

Respectfully,

Jodi Currie, Board Chair

Darryl Lindenbach, Executive Director



NOTES FROM THE LEIGHTON TEAM

RYLEY GELINAS | Exhibitions & Marketing Manager

In 2024, the Leighton Art Centre presented a vibrant lineup of exhibitions and events that highlighted artistic talent, environmental themes, and community celebration. After a short hiatus, the year kicked off with the *22nd Annual Juried Members Exhibition*, a virtual show featuring over 100 small-but-mighty artworks and concluded with an in-person gallery display during the always-popular Clothesline Art Market.

Spring exhibitions included *Kewanee Street* and *Nonsuch* which explored themes of place, memory, and architecture, while summer brought new perspectives with *The Power of Colours* and *A Gaze Between Four Walls*, alongside *Lungs of the Earth* by Troy Nickle, which included an outdoor installation titled *Sky Vessels*, in addition to the gallery show. The powerful group exhibition *Reimagining Fire: The Future of Energy* addressed climate and sustainability themes.

Alongside our main exhibitions, we welcomed guests to several special events, including two exhibition Opening Receptions, the Paint the Foothills plein air painting event, and the unforgettable Harvest Dinner & 50th Anniversary Celebration, complete with amazing food, wine, and art in a stunning outdoor setting. We also joined the Most Beautiful Art Tour in Alberta and ended the year on a jolly note with the Festive Foothills Art Sale. Through these exhibitions and events, the Centre fostered dialogue, reflection, and inspiration throughout the year.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE - EXHIBITIONS

February 9 to June 10, 2024

22nd Annual Juried Members Exhibition (Various artists)

LAC celebrated the incredible talent and creativity of our member artists with over 100 works - small in size and big on artistry!

April 6 to June 2, 2024

Kewanee Street (Malcolm Mooney & Doyle Lane, organized by u's)

This exhibition explored the affinities and connections between the hilltop artistic communities of *Kewanee Street* (set on the top of a large hill in El Sereno overlooking Los Angeles) and Leighton Art Centre.

April 6 to June 2, 2024

Nonsuch (Morgan Melenka)

With commercially printed materials, *Nonsuch* facilitated a discussion about the logic of North American built environments, history and imagined histories.

June 22 to August 25, 2024

The Power of Colours (Aldo Marchese)

Spring - a time of renewal and a season where nature awakens in a vivid symphony of colours, shapes, and scents - inspired Aldo Marchese's collection of hand-built abstract clay sculptures featured in this stunning exhibition.

June 22 to October 27, 2024 (outdoor), August 31 to October 27, 2024 (gallery)

Lungs of the Earth (Troy Nickle)

Troy Nickle considers trees as integral extensions of our bodies, functioning like lungs by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen and sustaining our breath. Nickle's *Lungs of the Earth* was shaped by a profound relationship with trees, resulting in site-specific installations and ephemeral works both inside and out.

June 22 to August 25, 2024

A Gaze Between Four Walls (Eileen Murray)

A Gaze Between Four Walls spanned more than a decade of Eileen Murray's artistic practice offering visitors a contemporary take on the still-life genre, filled with symbols of beauty, pleasure, fragility, and the transience of life.

September 7 – October 27, 2024

Reimagining Fire: The Future of Energy (Art and writing by Jill Ho-You, Jared Tailfeathers, Kasia Koralewska, Sylvia Arthur, Eveline Koliijn, Mary Kavanagh, Heather Urness, Larry Kapustka, Kathryn Gwun-Yeen 君妍 Lennon, Liz Ingram, Tara Manyfingers, Mar'ce Merrell, and Maggie Hanna, organized by Eveline Koliijn)

For *Reimagining Fire*, Energy Future Lab Fellow Eveline Koliijn, invited submissions from 40 Alberta printmakers, writers, and poets to reflect on the necessity of our society to combat climate change and preserve biodiversity. The exhibition explored foundational issues, including the priority of having access to clean air, the soil of the earth, and water.

EVENTS/MARKETS

Opening Reception: April 13

Nonsuch by Morgan Melenka and *Kewanee Street* by Malcolm Mooney & Doyle Lane, curated by u's.

Clothesline Art Market: June 8 & 9

Our annual event featuring 30 in-person vendors including Janice Blaine, Myrt Butler, Barbara Cameron, Mireille Cloutier, Sawyer Coles, Lynn Day, Anke Duffy, Mavis Gauchier, Hugh Hart, Shirley Hauck, Susan Hull, Karen Jackson, Jefferson Kaine, Heather Kinahan, Louise Lacey-Rokosh, Hannah Lacrampe, Tabitha Lester-Imeson, Deanne Lueck, Gerry Mulhall, Stephen Purdy, Mireille Rochon, Sheila Schaeztle, Kathryn Sherman, Andrea Slack, Marg Smith, Ashley Somerville, Azedah Tehrani, Marg Varga, Pamela Willis, and the Sheep Creek Weavers Fibre Arts Guild.

Opening Reception: June 22

A Gaze Between Four Walls by Eileen Murray, *The Power of Colours* by Aldo Marchese, and *Sky Vessels* (the outdoor aspect of Troy Nickle's upcoming gallery exhibition *Lungs of the Earth*).

Paint The Foothills: September 7 & 8

Our annual celebration (and version of Come Paint Alberta) open to everyone and featuring art, nature and plein air painting.

Harvest Dinner & 50th Anniversary Celebration: September 14

Proudly presented by The Edward and supported by Vinosity Wine Imports, this immersive gala experience blended culinary and visual delights, all to support LAC.

Most Beautiful Art Tour In Alberta: September 20 & 21

This annual event encourages visitors to take a self-guided journey among some of the best art destinations in the rolling foothills of our beautiful province. Participants included: Leighton Art Centre, Bluerock Gallery, Blanca Botero, Mady Thiel-Kopstein, Kristoferson Studio, and Firebrand Glass Studio.

Festive Foothills: November 9 to December 20

As a cornerstone of the LAC year, visitors enjoyed a wealth of holiday cheer in Alberta's beautiful Foothills region! With original art and fine crafts from more than 125 talented local artists, Festive Foothills was once again a memorable part the holiday season.





COREEN THORNHILL | *Public Programs Manager*

Art & Nature

Our Art & Nature programs welcomed **5,347 students** from our local schools. These immersive experiences afforded students the opportunity to explore the arts in an inspiring natural setting while learning about environmental stewardship, local ecology, and Barbara and A.C.'s artistic legacy. Teachers and school adult volunteers consistently had high praise for our hands-on learning and cross-curricular connections with **1,135 teachers and parents** visiting with classes during the year.

Art To Go

The Leighton Art Centre was able to offer our Art to Go program to more schools and community groups this year, reaching classrooms that might not otherwise be able to visit our site. Our instructors delivered high-quality, curriculum-connected art programming directly to schools in Calgary, Rocky View, and the Foothills area, serving over **879 students**.

Summer Camps

Our popular Summer Camp program continued to thrive. **461 campers** participated in four different themed art and nature camps (Woodland Creatures, Bring Back the Bison, Make it Pop, and Three-Dimensional Art) – with activities ranging from painting en plein air to exploring forest trails and wildlife habitats. Campers built confidence in their creativity, made meaningful friendships, and enjoyed time outdoors in our beautiful foothills setting while our dedicated team ensured a safe, inclusive, and joy-filled experience for every participant.

Workshops

LAC hosted a diverse array of workshops for adults and youth this year, ranging from beginner art techniques to professional development. New offerings such as An Earth Day Experience: Blending Science & Art with DVLSA brought fresh energy and audiences to our Centre and allowed us to work with other organizations. Community feedback was very positive as participants expressed their love our welcoming environment, expert instruction, and the value of learning new skills in such a unique and inspiring space.

Workshops in 2024 included:

- Art For Change (*Andrea Merredew*)
- Creating Cyanotypes (*Arlene Westen*)
- An Earth Day Experience: Blending Science & Art (*DVLSC*)
- Make Your Own Water-Based Paints (*DVLSC*)
- Exploring Sustainability: What It Means for Albertans!
- Oil Landscape Painting (*Theresa Williams*)
- Looking for Glimmers: A Springtime Retreat Day (*Julia Dawson*)
- Block Printing on Fabric (*Michelle Wiebe*)
- On the Road - Travel (*Michelle Wiebe*)
- Oil Landscape Painting – Session #2 (*Theresa Williams*)
- Forest Bathing (*Alberta DeFrancesco*)
- Writing Land & Place (*Ashley Holloway*)
- Guided Plant Walk (*Kalyn Kodiak*)

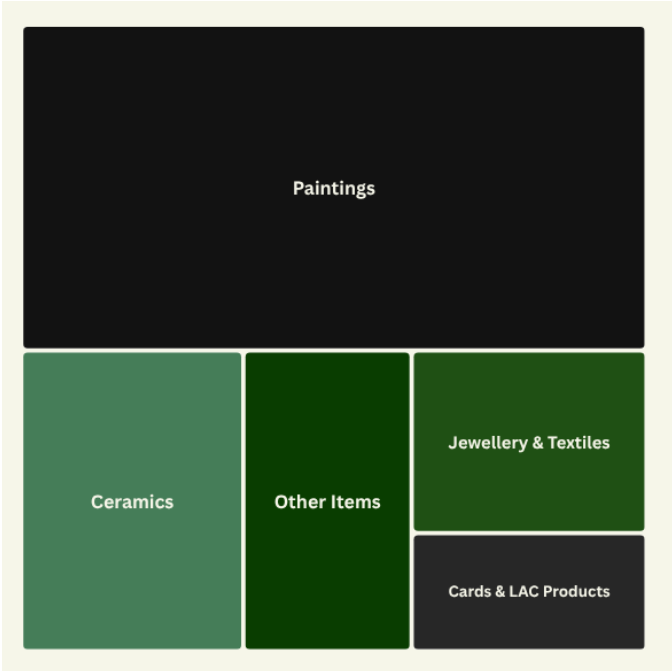
We are deeply grateful to the schools, families, artists, educators, and community partners who make our work possible. Thank you for your support, participation, and passion for the arts, history, and nature education. We are excited to build on this year's successes and continue evolving our programs to meet the needs of our community.



JOANNE SMITH | Gallery Shop and Guest Services Manager

With a three-month closure, 2024 presented a number of challenges for LAC, however, with the planned implementation of new sales systems, a new consignment process and renewed focus on shop operations, progress is now being made and the future is looking positive. With artists coming and going from our roster, we continued to support our local communities, and the Clothesline Art Sale was a highlight of the year for sales.

The Shop at a Glance:
Total Sales: \$192,739



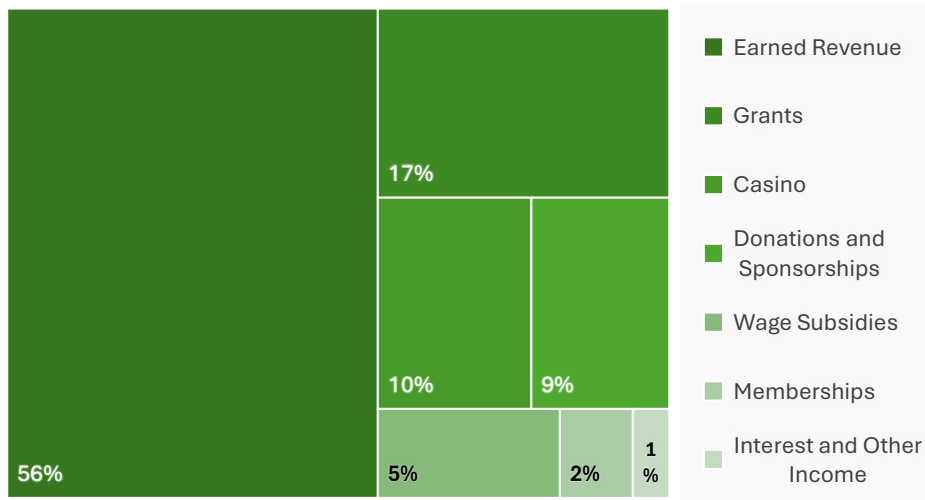
ALISON MARSHALL | Operations Manager

One of the changes during 2024 was the introduction of a new Operations Manager position. Touching on many different aspects, from infrastructure and processes to streamlining and implementing procedures, this new position combines problem-solving, strategic planning with a strong focus on facilities work and organization. The future will see the position focus on the compilation of a comprehensive operations manual (with proper historical documentation), streamlining procedures, the identification of areas of waste and potential cost savings and securing the most compatible vendors and outside support. Site needs and infrastructure will also play a key future role to ensure the protection of our valuable assets and to chart a path for LAC’s future needs. With the help of many talented and hardworking volunteers, there was much work undertaken during 2024 including cleaning, painting, repairing and refreshing various aspects of the Museum and Ed Centre; along with grounds maintenance, flower bed management, and pruning and repotting of plants throughout the site.

FINANCIALS

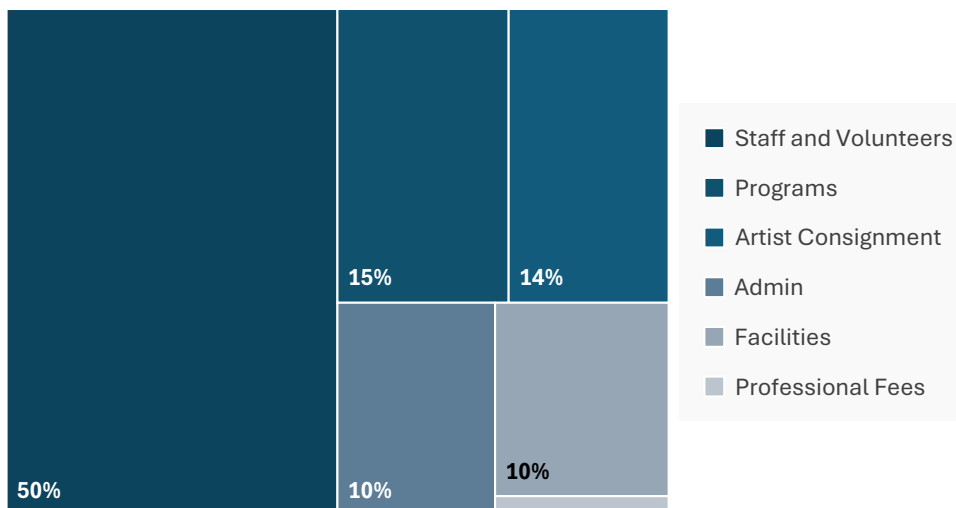
For 2024 Audited Financial Statements visit: leightoncentre.org

2024 Revenues



OPERATING REVENUE: \$880,045 | **OPERATING EXPENSES: \$841,595**

2024 Expenses



COMMUNITY, FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

ATTENDANCE:	21,180 (+8%)
Exhibitions:	10,750 (+9%)
Youth Education:	10,200 (+6%)
Workshops:	230 (+6%)

COMMUNITY:

Members:	510 (+4%)
Volunteers:	259 (+4%)
Volunteer Hours:	1,500 (+4%)
Activities:	26 (+4%)
Earned by Artists:	\$151,067

The Leighton Foundation gratefully acknowledges the support of:

OUR FUNDERS



OUR PARTNERS

Little Rock Printing, Come Paint Alberta, The Most Beautiful Art Tour in Alberta, Tourism Calgary, Family and Community Support Services, Federation of Calgary Communities

OUR MEDIA FRIENDS AND SPECIAL EVENT PARTNERS

Avenue Magazine Calgary, CKUA, CJSW 90.9FM, CTV, The Eagle 100.9FM, Global Calgary, High Country News, Okotoks Western Wheel, and Deane House/River Café, Devour Catering, Framed on Fifth, Okotoks Sobeys, Paven Design, SAIT, Special Event Rentals, Spolumbo's, The Edward, Vinosity Wines.

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-2024

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Jodi Currie
Vice Chair

Jody Germaine
Secretary

Darryl Hass
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James Midwinter
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Melissa Cole
Past Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025

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Chair

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Vice Chair/Secretary

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Bill Peters
Georgine Ulmer
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Melissa Cole
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& Darryl Lindenbach**
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Operations Manager

Amanda MacKay
Marketing &
Communications Director

Coreen Thornhill
Manager of Public Programs

Joanne Smith
Manager of Gallery Shop
& Guest Services

Ryley Gelinias
Collections Intern

EDUCATION CENTRE AND GALLERY STAFF

Art & Nature Educators:

Aidan Hulse
Alberta DeFrancesco
Amanda Tanner
Avery Desrosiers
Meredith Wilson
Neil Dawson
Pam O'Brien

Gallery Shop Attendants:

Amy Chandler
Andrew Coles
Linda MacDonald
Zoe Wallace

Summer Camp Staff:

Ace Duguid
Aidan Hulse
Hannah Mortimer
Isabella Carver
Meredith Wilson
Wonhyeong Cho

CONTACT US

P: 403.931.3633

E: info@leightoncentre.org

W: leightoncentre.org

Facebook:

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